

C. H. S.

# BANDWAGON

1954, Vol. 3—MARCH

25c



SPRING  
EDITION

— The Circusiana Magazine —

# CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1939

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\$1.50 a year in U.S.A.

Advertising rates--

\$5.00 Full Page

\$3.50 Half Page

\$2.00 Quarter Page

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## The Editor Says

With this Spring Edition we are looking forward to the opening of Mills Bros. Circus with the renewal of friendships from the preceding years. We have been watching the work on the Quarters slowly making headway, until the last week things have gotten into high gear.

Maybe many of you in other parts of the country also go to openings, and we would like to hear from you about them.

I want to thank all of you who have sent in such fine historical articles in the past few months. It takes a lot of research to turn out these, particularly since most of the writers are busy business men. I want to particularly thank John Kunzog, Dick Conover, F. C. Fisher and Charlie Duble. Keep up the good work.

Remember that dues for everyone are now payable on May 1. Please pro rate what you owe at 30¢ a month and pay up to May 1, 1955.

## NEW MEMBER

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NATIONAL CIRCUS WEEK

JUNE 1-7, 1954

# Amazing Facts About Ringling

By Sverre O. Braathen

The American circus knows but two days. Today and tomorrow. It knows but two towns. Today's town and tomorrow's town. It is said that the most asked question around the lot is: "From where did you come and where are you going?"

From where did the Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows and the Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows come and where did it go the past seventy years. We of course know that the Ringling show came from Baraboo, Wisconsin; that the Barnum and Bailey, Greatest Show on Earth came from Bridgeport, Connecticut; that the five Ringling Bros. founded the Ringling circus and that William C. Coup of Delavan, Wisconsin, founded the Barnum and Bailey Circus and that it went to Sarasota, Florida. In between Baraboo and Bridgeport to Sarasota, however, it went to many places.

The Ringling Bros. and the Ringling Barnum Combine have gone to 1817 different cities and villages during the past seventy years and it has taken 9,107 show movements both overland and by rail as well as by barges to get the show to these cities and communities. Then, too, the show (referring to the Ringling and the Combine), has travelled well over a half million miles to make the moves to all the communities that have been played the past seventy years.

During this period of long and continuous operation this circus has come up with the grand total of 12,707 show dates and has given 25,079 performances in this country. These totals do not include the Cuban engagements nor the engagement of the Al G. Barnes Sells Floto presenting Ringling and Barnum features in 1938.

Millions of people throughout the country have no doubt worried about the weather conditions with the coming of Ringling circus day. They have wondered whether or not the show would get to town because of rain, wrecks and other enemies of the circus. With the exception of Brainerd, Minnesota, which in 1953, was billed for the first time in the history of the show and lost because of rain and a soft lot, the chances are good you will see the show once it has billed a town. In its long history of seventy years the Ringling show has lost but 92 days and most of these because of the Hartford fire and it has had but 342 one performance dates. It is next to impossible for this great circus to give more than two shows in one day but, nevertheless, it has had six extra performances.

The show has played every state in the union as well as Canada. However, some states are more favored than others. Nevada for instance has had but four days and seven performances. Wyoming has had sixteen circus days and 24 performances. The most favorite state is New York with its Madison Square Garden and the long Garden engagements. New York state has had 1695 show dates and seen 3366 performances. Next in order are Illinois with 1245 show days and 2465 performances; Iowa, 810 days and 1612 performances; Pennsylvania, 738 days and 1468 performances; Texas, 676 days and 1330 performances, and Wisconsin, 551 days and 1090 performances.

Even though New York has had the most circus days and the most performances the State of Illinois has had the show in the most different seasons. In its seventy years of operation the show has bypassed the great state of Illinois only four times. Without taking a look at the statistics one would be inclined to believe that the home state of Wisconsin would have seen the show the most different seasons. However, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio, have seen the show in 61 of the seventy years. These are followed by Iowa, Missouri, and Pennsylvania, with fifty-seven each; New York, fifty-six, and Michigan, fifty-three.

Although New York far outranks all other states so far as show dates and performances are concerned, nevertheless the great corn state of Iowa has had the show in more different communities. Two hundred ninety-two different cities and villages of Iowa have seen the show at one time or other. Most of these came during the wagon show days. Iowa is followed by Illinois with 194; Wisconsin, 139. Likewise the show has made the most moves in Iowa with 820 and followed by Illinois with 615; Texas, 603; Wisconsin, 532; Ohio, 456, and Pennsylvania, 442.

In 1953 the show played Oxnard and Panorama City, California; Oshawa, Trois Reveiers; St. Catherines and Windsor, Canada; Panama City, Florida; Biloxi, Mississippi; Bridgeton, New Jersey, and Port Arthur, Texas, for the first time. Also the show in 1953 played many cities for the first time in the past twenty-five to fifty years. The fact remains, however, that only one hundred-four cities have had the show twenty or more times. Chicago ranks first with fifty-three visits of the show. The show has come to Milwaukee forty-seven times and Detroit 46, Boston 44 and Madison, Wisconsin, and Buffalo, New York, 43 times.

The earliest closing date of the show came in 1938, on June 22nd, at Scranton, Pennsylvania, when the show was closed by the strike. The depression closed the show on September 14, 1931, at Atlanta, Georgia. The latest closing date came on November 28 at Aberdeen, Mississippi, in 1898; Sarasota, Florida, in 1946 and Miami, Florida, in 1948. The longest mileage was reeled off in 1941, with 20,030 miles. The fewest show dates came in 1938 with sixty-nine and one thirty-six performances. The most show dates came in 1953 with 219 and the greatest number of performances were given in 1946 and 1952 with 431. The most lost dates came in 1944, because of the fire, all days billed but not played being deemed lost. The fewest cities were played in 1944 with 25 as a result of the fire. The strike caused a low of 26 cities in 1938. The war kept the total low in 1943 with 57 and 62 in 1945 and the depression kept the number down in 1931 to 84. In the strike year the show played the least number of states with 10. The war, the fire, and depression also had its effect. Sixteen states were played in 1944; 18 in 1943; twenty-two in 1945, and 23 in 1931.

Many other statistics could be given but in closing we will mention that Merle Evans has had the band for thirty-five of the seventy years the show has been on the road.

# Circus Movies Past and Present

By Arthur Dodge, Niagara Falls, New York

Since Cecil B. DeMille's "The Greatest Show on Earth" was such a great hit as a circus movie and with Clyde Beatty's coming movie on big top life "Ring of Fear" with star Pat O'Brien also being filmed, as well as Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis in "The Big Top" and Burt Lancaster in "Trapeze," the author has made a little research and compiled a list of movies. Some of these are very old and so perhaps the casts are not completely accurate.

The list follows:

- "The Iron Test" with Antonio Moreno, a serial.....Vitagraph Studios, 1918  
 "Peg O' The Ring" with Grace Cunard, serial .....Universal, 1916  
 "Lure of the Circus" with Eddie Polo, serial.....Universal, 1918  
 "Circus Days" with Jackie Coogan .....First National Picture, 1923  
 "The Great Circus Mystery" with Joe Bonomo, Louise Lorraine, serial  
 ..... Universal, 1920  
 "Sally of the Sawdust" starring W. C. Fields and Carol Dempster....Universal, 1920  
 "Spangles" with Marion Nixon and Pat O'Malley .....Universal  
 "The Circus Ace" starring Tom Mix  
 "He Who Gets Slapped" with Lon Chaney, John Gilbert, Norma Shearer  
 .....M. G. M., 1924  
 "The Circus" with Charles Chaplin, Merna Kennedy.....United Artists, 1925  
 "Laugh Clown Laugh," Lon Chaney, Loretta Young.....M. G. M., 1928  
 "Variety," Emil Jannings, Lydia De Putti .....United Artists  
 "Polly of the Circus," Marion Davies, Clark Gable .....M. G. M.  
 "Four Devils," Janet Gaynor, Barry Norton  
 "Three Ring Marriage," Mary Astor, Lloyd Hughes.....First National Picture  
 "Freaks," with Wallace Ford, Leila Hyames, Olga Baclanova, Roscoe Ates,  
 Harry Earles, Tiny and Grace Doll, Johnny Eck, Daisy and Violet Hilton,  
 and other side-show people .....M. G. M.  
 "The Big Cage," Clyde Beatty, Raymond Hatton, Anita Paige, Mickey Rooney  
 ..... Universal  
 "Chad Hanna," Henry Fonda, Dorothy Lemour, Jane Darwell, Guy Kibbee,  
 Linda Darnell .....20th Century Fox Picture, 1940  
 "The Wagons Roll at Night," Humphrey Bogart, Sylvia Sidney, Eddie Albert,  
 Joan Leslie .....Warner Bros. Pic, 1940  
 "O'Shaunessey's Boy," Wallace Beery, Jackie Cooper.....M. G. M.  
 "Peck's Bad Boy at the Circus," Tommy Kelley, Marcia May Jones, Billy  
 Gilbert, Poodles Hanneford Family .....Universal Picture  
 "A Day at the Circus," Marx Bros., Eve Arden .....M. G. M.  
 "Fearless Fagan," Carleton Carpenter, Janet Leigh, Keenan Wynn.....M. G. M.  
 "The Greatest Show on Earth," with Betty Hutton, Dorothy Lamour, Charleton  
 Heston, Cornel Wilde, Gloria Grahame, Lyle Bettger, Lawrence Tierney,  
 Emmett Kelly, Cucciola, Antionette Concetto, and James Stewart  
 ..... Paramount, 1952  
 "Man on the Tightrope," Frederic March, Terry Moore, Gloria Grahame,  
 Paul Hartman .....20th Century Fox, 1952  
 "Story of 3 Loves," Last half of movie, features Pier Angeli and Kirk  
 Douglas in Equilibrium about two aerialists.....M. G. M.  
 "The Fat Man," Jack Smart, Emmett Kelly .....Universal International  
 —Bandwagon, March, 1954—Page 5

# Modern German Circus

By Fritz Dillenburg

The December programme of the CIRCUS BARLAY in Berlin was not so good, and I have therefore abstained from giving a report. The January programme however includes some remarkable acts, as f. i. the High School presented by ADOLF MARK. Adolf Mark who is an experienced and reputed circus artiste, presents a really very fine act, and he must be classed amongst the best High School riders whom we have in Germany at the present time. With much pleasure I have seen again MICHON with his groupe of Ice Bears. Michon has succeeded in improving this act very much. Good is also the mixed groupe (2 lions and 4 tigers) presented by A. BEERMANN. These two groupes belong to KLANT in Holland. The liberty horses from the Circus AEROS in Leipzig where is working at present Hans STRASSBURGER, show an average but proper work. Several acrobatic acts complete this programme.

From the circus point of view, the arrival of Mr. Emil WACKER with his programme "Humans, Animals and Sensations" was an important event. Wacker has succeeded in making up a first-class programme, there was not one act of minor quality. The mixed groupe from the Circus CARL HAGENBECK presented by Mr. STEINHOFF, consisting of 3 superb lions, 2 ice bears and 3 brown bears, was just as good as the liberty horses from the Circus WILLIAMS presented by the Great Petoletti. The High School by Jeanette Althoff was applauded as much as the act of 6 elephants presented by Adolf ALTHOFF.

The ballett as well as the various acrobatic acts were really first-class. In all, it was a beautiful programme, worth of a capital.

But in spite of the strong programme, affairs were not good. Of course the date chosen for the show was not very favourable, but I am more and more convinced that the best times of the circus have passed. My friends in America and elsewhere say the same, Beautiful and good programmes, but the success is not worthwhile the efforts made by the managers.

I finish my report in drawing the attention of my friends to two books which have just appeared:

Paul EIPPER: "Circus", 2nd edition with a new choice of magnificent photographs. Mainly those circus friends who have not the possibility of accompanying a circus enterprise on tour, should not fail to buy this book which describes all the work from the arrival of a circus in a town up to the departure. The show, the life of the artistes and of the manager, the representations, the training of animals and the rehearsals are described not only in a very comprehensible manner, but also so lively that one has the impression to be present in the circus oneself. This is really one of the best books which has been written on the circus. It has been published at R. PIPER & CO., Munich, Georgengstrasse 4.

(Continued on page 7)

## MODERN GERMAN CIRCUS (Cont'd)

The second book: "The Great Charly" by Robert PAYNE describes the life of Charly CHAPLIN, from his sad childhood, his first success up to the creation of the figure of the big clown of the moving pictures as we all know him. Perhaps these things do not interest the circus fan so very much, because after all the life of Charly Chaplin has not much to do with the circus, but what renders the book interesting is the fact that Robert Payne tells in the book the history of the clown, the signification of his make-up, what he will tell us by his work. I must say since I have read this book, the clown has become for me still more than a friend, a brother. And for this reason I beg to draw the attention of all fans to this book which has been published at the Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Frankfurt/Main, Goethestrasse 29.

### CARD OF THANKS

Harry Simpson, former Editor of the Bandwagon, wants to thank all of you for the flowers, cards and letters he has received from you. Harry is still in the hospital, but making progress, so keep on sending cards to him. His address is 8100 N. Main St., Dayton, Ohio.

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# "Doc" Karland Honored

Dr. Carl S. (Karland) Frischkorn, who many of us remember with pleasure since the Cincinnati Convention has recently been honored with a life membership in the Circus Saints and Sinners. He is a member of the Consolvo Tent. Doc is slowly recovering from a fall he had in the bathtub. He suffered some broken ribs and other injuries.

More recently he has been honored by the Magicians as shown in this clipping from the Norfolk paper.

## Ring Takes Name From Frischkorn

Local magicians have honored Dr. Carl S. Frischkorn by changing the name of their organization from Tidewater Ring Number 103 to Karland Frischkorn Ring Number 103. Dr. Frischkorn uses the name Karland in his magic performances.

The action, which came as a complete surprise to Dr. Frischkorn, was taken over the weekend when a sheepskin with a record of the change was presented to him by George F. Brietz on the behalf of the group.

Brietz said that the change was made "in honor of the long and sincere work of Karland Frischkorn, local guiding light in magic circles, both locally and nationally."

Dr. Frischkorn, for many years a practicing physician in Norfolk, is nationally known for his work in magic. Brietz explained the local group had made the change at this time so that the ring's name would be changed before the Magicians' Alliance of Eastern States holds its convention here in September. About 400 magicians will attend.

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## Opening Dates

As near as we have been able to ascertain these are the opening dates for some of the circuses.

Kelly-Morris -----	March	Millers Bros. Rodeo ----	April 7
Loyola-Repenski -----	March	Tex Carson Wild Animal	
		Circus -----	April 14
Clyde Beatty -----	March 20	G. W. Cole Circus ----	April 15
Hagen Bros. -----	March 22	Mills Bros. -----	April 17
Ringling Bros., Barnum and		Kelly-Miller -----	April 18
Bailey -----	March 31	Hunt Bros. -----	April 22

## Friend of C. H. S. passes on March 1

Many members of the Circus Historical Society remember John Robinson IV for his help and cheerful assistance at the C. H. S. Convention in Cincinnati. We also met his Mother, who survives him. Mr. Robinson was 60 years old and a Cincinnati attorney, and the fourth generation of the Robinson family which organized the John Robinson Circus here in 1824, died of cancer Monday at the winter home of his mother, Mrs. Leonora S. Robinson, in Miami. He had gone to Miami two months ago.

Robinson entered law practice 38 years ago after an early career with his family in the circus business. He also worked for a time in silent movies in California. Deceased was prominently identified with Phi Delta Phi, legal fraternity, for many years, and was also a Sigma Chi. He was also a member of the Cincinnati Lawyer's Club and the Cincinnati, Ohio State and American Bar associations.

A 32nd degree Mason, Robinson was also a member of the National Circus Fans' Association and a vice-president of the local tent of that organization.

In addition to his mother, Robinson is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Betty Luneborg, Shreveport, La.; twin sisters, Mrs. Leonora Krehbiel, Detroit, and Mrs. Eleanor Patterson, Miami, and three grandchildren.

Services were held in Miami Thursday, with burial postponed until a later date in the Robinson mausoleum in Spring Grove Cemetery, this city.

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## Mrs. Pauline Leonard dies

Mrs. Frank (Pauline) Leonard died in a Wichita, Kansas, hospital on March 3 this year. She was buried in Wichita on March 6. She was the mother of Fred Leonard and Albertina Craft. Our sympathy is extended to them and to Bette Leonard, her devoted daughter-in-law. The Circus Historical Society sent flowers for which the family expressed sincere thanks.

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Bob and Agnes King along with KY and Rita Sagraves attended the Shrine Circus in Dayton, Ohio, on March 19th. Most enjoyable to Agnes were Jack Joyce's camels, this is something out of the ordinary; imagine camels doing a liberty act. They seem to be very docile and work with very little prompting or prodding. Although it was a stormy night there was a good crowd.

# New Addition to Mills Bros. Personnel

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## NATIONAL CIRCUS WEEK

Paul La Valle's Band of America will again open Circus Week with a salute to same during Circus Week, June 1-7, 1954.

Circus fans and all interested in the perpetuation of a grand American institution are already making plans for a greater observance of this event in 1954.

Last year's events resulted in favorable publicity among leading newspapers and magazines, special radio programs and model circus exhibits.

An early start by individuals and groups in planning this year's observance will result in great benefit to all circus enthusiasts according to Ray Bickford, last year's chairman who is handling publicity for Circus Week.

Sponsored by the Circus Clown Club of America, whose membership comprises professional clowns of the leading circuses as well as amateurs, the observance is not confined to any one organization. It offers an opportunity for all interested in the circus, its historical and educational aspects to get on "The Band Wagon" for more and better circuses in 1954.

# Circus Chronology

## This Month Last Year

"Reprinted from the Billboard, January 9, 1954"

Compiled by Tom Parkinson

KELLY-MILLER announced it would put most of its animals in a menagerie top and use standard Side Show acts this season.

PAT ANTHONY'S LIONS and the Coronas paced the new Hamid-Morton edition.

ED LEARMONT, animal trainer, died at Los Angeles.

HEINZ RUHE, animal importer, died in Germany.

BAILEY BROS., operated by Big Bob Stevens with backing from Gil Gray, prepared to open as a grandstand and ball-park unit.

HAGEN-WALLACE Circus, owned by Frank Martin and managed by Art Sturmak, opened in Florida.

NORMAN ANDERSON, owner of Wallace & Clark Circus, said Jack Turner was to be agent.

GIL GRAY CIRCUS opened at Sioux City, Ia.

R. M. HARVEY, agent; Skinny Goe, bandmaster, and Milt Robbins were signed by Diano Bros.' Circus.

CANADIAN BORDER charges and other fees for shows were hiked.

KING BROS. & CRISTIANI CIRCUS announced plans for a balloon ascension feature for 1953.

WINTER DATES at Kansas City, Wichita, St. Paul, and Chicago were among the winners.

RINGLING-BARNUM abandoned its auspices policy and announced it would play only a few sponsored stands in 1953.

MILLS BROS.' CIRCUS won another publicity break when NBC filmed winter quarters activity and showed the films on TV shows.

BILL BAILEY MINSTRELS closed and Si Rubens announced he again would take charge of Rogers Bros.' Circus.

"THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH," movie of the Ringling-Barnum show, won the Academy Award. Ringling advance sale and press work were moving smoothly in New York.

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Sent in by Walter Fox

\* \* \*

It's great to be a kid once more, and hear the lions growl  
and roar, and see the bears and feed the monks, and  
sprinkle peanuts on the trunks of the elephants, all in  
a row, that keep a-swinging to and fro; it's grand, you  
know, to be a kid and see the great big circus show.

It's great to sit and watch the clowns perform their  
funny ups and downs and see them laugh and hear them  
chaff until you split your sides in half; and watch those  
blokes play funny jokes, upon some unsuspecting mokes,  
as fat and thin they amble in to make you squeal and  
smile and grin.

It's fine to sit and watch the rings that held so many,  
many things with horses here and horses there; and  
pretty girls with golden curls, performing scary mid-air  
whirls, and drivers, bold in cars of gold, that race as in  
the days of old; and monkeys that will ride astride of  
ponies that are true and tried, and throw a ball, but  
never fall; it's mighty hard to watch it all.

It's great to see the big circus parade, and swallow circus  
lemonade, and see the lights and wonder sights, and  
pretty girls in spangled tights; and feast your gaze up-  
on the blaze the tent displays. Oh, once a year, it's  
grand you know, to see the circus show.